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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses issues unique to theological schools, which face challenges associated with changes in the composition of student bodies, faculties, and boards; increased pressures on administrators; and reduced funding. The discussion is organized around five major issues: (1) distinguishing features of theological schools, which historically have had two purposes--to educate religious leaders and to pursue theological research; (2) changes in student demographics and religious "enculturation" challenge schools' educational programs and raise questions about the relationship between seminaries and church bodies; (3) the faculty and the vocation of theological schools--small faculties, limited budgets, and fragmentation of the theological curriculum affect both faculty and students, and the discussion centers on such questions as how theological schools can maintain both enrollments and standards of admission, how much responsibility they have for providing remedial courses, and what is the school's role in religious formation; (4) how decreases in denominational contributions and a lack of consensus on theological accountability impact on governance and management of theological schools; and (5) finances and the costs of deferred maintenance of physical property, noting some of the differences between Protestant denominational institutions and Roman Catholic schools. (Contains 18 references.) (CH)

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Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Perspectives on the Current Status of and Emerging Policy Issues for Theological Schools and Seminaries

By Christa R. Klein

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
(by section)

I. Distinguishing Features of Theological Schools

Theological schools have a two-fold purpose for the sake of the church in the world: the education of religious leaders and the pursuit of theological scholarship. Current cultural conditions impede the pursuit of this vocation. The schools are diverse, fragile and vulnerable and their survival as institutions faithful to their calling requires creative leadership.

II. Students and the Vocation of Theological Schools

In a time of increasing public concern about the quality of candidates for the ministry, changes in student populations raise significant policy questions. More students are enrolled in more programs and represent a wider swath of religious people in age, gender, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation and preseminary education. The variety reveals greater diversity in religious "enculturation." Pilgrimages to seminary are more individual and challenge a school's educational program, raising fresh questions about the relationship between seminaries and church bodies.

III. The Faculty and the Vocation of Theological Schools

Small faculties, limited academic budgets and expanding programs are stretching academic resources to the limit in ways that impede the pursuit of a school's vocation. The fragmentation of the theological curriculum deeply affects the faculty and students. Centrifugal tendencies are jeopardizing the vocation of theological schools.

IV. Management and Governance and the Vocation of Theological Schools

Ambivalence about administration and a high rate of turnover in the offices of president and academic dean are depriving schools of stable leadership. Chief executives are at the center of the vortex of changes altering the nature of theological education. Seminary publics have increased their expectation of presidential performance at the very time when the outlines of the office are the least clear. Faculties and boards are often in tension over their proper roles in policy making. At the same time that boards are having to assume greater responsibility for

fundraising, they are demonstrating concern over the direction of theological education and the quality of seminary graduates.

V. Finances and Physical Plants and the Vocation of Theological Schools

Denominational funding patterns are being altered by a general decrease in revenues from national and regional church offices. The costs of deferred maintenance will constitute one of the major challenges of the 1990s. As schools face growing pressures to generate their own funding, leaders recognize incentives for strengthening governing boards through recruitment and education. The involvement of growing numbers of lay people calls for a reexamination of the role of clergy and laity on governing boards.

VI. Conclusion

Theological schools face challenges that are dramatically altering the composition of student bodies, faculties and boards, increasing pressures on administrators and reducing former certainties about funding. Centrifugal forces of pluralism are at work in a time when North American Christianity appears to be more fluid and less able to contain itself within denominational lines or to socialize people to the faith in the once traditional ways.

Will governing boards become "learning organizations" in time to avoid the dangers of blind drift or mindless adaptation? To serve as stewards, trustees first must face important truths about their own corporate efforts and the context and condition of their schools. The vocation of theological schools depends upon the exercise of candor.

I. Distinguishing Features of Theological Schools

This assignment included the invitation to write about trends and conditions in theological schools from "a personal, even provocative, perspective." To be fair then, I must confess to the sources of my views. I have been observing theological education from various angles for fifteen years now, first researching the history of theological education, then teaching American church history at a seminary, and next evaluating programs in seminary trusteeship for Lilly Endowment. Currently, I am a program consultant on seminary governance to the Endowment and am completing a study based on interviews with trustees in Protestant seminaries. As a volunteer, I serve on the board of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Although my experience has exposed me to many schools, Protestant and Roman Catholic, I am not yet familiar with the four Jewish graduate schools for rabbinical studies nor with undergraduate institutions of theological education, such as Bible colleges. The schools I know best and will be discussing here have accredited or associate membership in the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the accrediting agency for graduate theological education in the United States and Canada.

I did not begin my career expecting to work in theological schools, but have grown in my commitment to their historic prom-

ise. Many schools preceded and in fact laid the foundations for the national and regional church bodies and religious movements of today. Historically these schools have had two purposes: to provide for (1) the education of religious leadership for the many forms of North American Christianity and (2) the pursuit of theological research and discourse on behalf of the churches and the larger social order.

Today, I believe that conditions in church and culture are obstructing the exercise of these purposes in unforeseen ways. Nevertheless, I would speak ahistorically were I to suggest that institutional duress is a new phenomenon in theological education. Most seminaries have known long periods of crisis and instability. Nevertheless, today many are noting signs of new trouble: the historic promise of theological schools as centers of learning is less recognized from without and, some say, is more trivialized and squandered from within than in recent memory. Centrifugal forces are battering these schools to a degree that impedes their ability to maintain their integrity and to fulfill their vocations. Such times call for critical loyalty and analytical love among all who befriend theological schools.

Several features which distinguish theological schools among other institutions of higher education may lend analytical perspective. The first derives from the very nature of the loyalty they elicit. Theological schools, variously known as seminaries, theologates and divinit schools, are loved mostly for their

larger purposes and only secondarily for what they do for the individual student.

This expansive loyalty, which shows up whenever seminary trustees discuss why they serve, runs counter to the research on effective trusteeship in the private collegiate sector. There the more concrete the expression of appreciation for a particular institution, the greater the likelihood of a competent board. More generalized expressions of loyalty, for example, to "the purposes of higher education," are indicative of disengagement and ineffective trusteeship. In contrast, the most profound loyalty to a theological school is often voiced as concern for the service it provides beyond itself to the churches and to society. At the same time, of course, the loyalty of seminary trustees, like that of any other trustees, grows even deeper with more prolonged and wider exposure to the school.

Such allegiance bears inherent dangers and advantages for the school. When institutional goals are viewed as primarily external to the institution, a governing board may be tempted to deplete institutional resources without safeguarding institutional integrity. On the other hand, external goals supply standards which may prepare the board for less parochial evaluations of institutional performance.

The importance of religious differences among the seminaries also distinguishes them from other institutions of higher learning. Theological schools are not simply "religious" or "sec-

tarian." The form that religion takes can affect everything, including what is taught, who is admitted, who teaches and how governance is structured. I am convinced by research and experience that neither generalizations about the whole body of schools nor comments about a single institution hold up without acknowledging these differences and their effects. I also believe that these schools in all their diversity have a contribution to make in sustaining the religious vitality of American Christianity. Genuine differences require those conversations and debates which keep traditions theologically honest and which shape religious identities.

At a minimum, three sets of distinctions are especially important for capturing the range of diversity. First, among Protestant schools, the distinction between a "mainline" religious orientation and an "evangelical" one suggests divisions over the nature of biblical and doctrinal authority, ecumenical relations, and social ethics. Mainline schools tend to incorporate intellectual, theological and political aspects of modernity more openly, while evangelical schools tend to resist them and adopt a more theologically protective stance. Usually the denominations with which the schools are affiliated influence religious orientation, although most denominations include the full spectrum of views within their memberships.

Some researchers take a denomination's membership in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of

America as indicative of the mainline orientation of the denomination's affiliated seminaries. Non-membership is evidence of an evangelical orientation. Historically this distinction is useful. For example, many of the mainline schools have roots in variety of cooperative ventures, including the ATS. Indeed, both evangelical and Roman Catholic schools have only more recently joined the ATS in numbers. While these crude divisions do not describe the tremendous variety within each camp, they do indicate the directions of that diversity.

Second, both groups of Protestant schools can also be classified by whether they are directly "denominational" or "independent" in their affiliation. Roughly one-half (96) of all ATS member schools are mainline and about three out four of those are denominationally affiliated. Nearly a quarter (50) ATS schools are evangelical, and two out of three of them are denominational.

Third, among Roman Catholic schools, which make up another quarter (54) of the membership of the ATS, distinctions are of a different sort. Three-fifths of these schools are considered freestanding because they provide the entire program of theological education. One-fifth are university related and have parts of their educational program handled in the university. The remaining one-fifth function in a collaborative style by sharing resources with several institutions either as legal unions, cooperative clusters or federations. Most of any type are under the supervision of either a diocesan bishop or the superior of a

religious order. All are accountable to the Vatican. Among the freestanding schools, increasingly significant differences in governance and program are emerging between those which educate only candidates for the priesthood and all others where lay people, including women and non-Catholics, may also attend.

Several other features distinguish theological schools within American higher education. Almost all are graduate schools primarily devoted to the theological education of "professional" religious leaders for congregations and religious organizations. A course of study leading to the masters of divinity degree usually determines the basic curriculum.

And, in different ways and with varying degrees of formality, most theological schools depend upon church bodies both for the recruitment of students and for their certification for employment upon graduation. Such connections to the churches at both ends of schooling keep theological institutions tied closely to changes within American religious life, and not only to the demographics of higher education. Thus, current concerns about the quality of candidates for ministry must be addressed both to the churches and to theological schools.

In addition, relative to other institutions of higher education, these schools are tiny, more akin in size to private secondary boarding schools than to colleges or universities. For example, of the 202 theological schools on the 1989 roster of the ATS, 90 have a headcount of 150 or fewer students, while 91 have

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from 151 to 500 students and only 21 have more than 500.

Nevertheless, size is no predictor of institutional complexity. To remain accredited as graduate level institutions, these schools must behave like universities, whether they are free-standing, as most are, university divinity schools or share a governance structure with a college. In fact, some 45 schools offer the doctor of philosophy degree and most offer academic masters degrees along with the first professional degree. They maintain research libraries and hire faculty with doctorates.

Yet, in addition to maintaining their academic standing, these schools must cultivate other forms of credibility with their church publics. They are expected to provide continuing education for pastors and opportunities for the education of the laity. Their faculties are on the speaking circuit at various church gatherings. Their bookstores and libraries must be accessible to church leaders in the region. In addition, there are networks created by family ties, congregational experience, and seminary classes which link administrators, faculty, and board members to each other and to church publics in ways that make disinterested assessments of a school or its faculty relatively difficult.

In sum, this body of schools is marked by diversity, fragility and vulnerability. Their survival as schools faithful to their vocations depends on creative leadership that is more than technically proficient in the skills of governance and

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management. Creative leadership will find its sustenance in a commitment to the future that draws upon the history of the school's vocation and relation to its publics. To serve as a member of the governing board, administration or faculty in one of these schools requires a kind of sophistication that may have gone out of style in other sectors of higher education. Part of that wisdom rests in the belief that even more than the quality of religious leadership hinges on the vitality of theological schools. Their promise includes their crucial role in nourishing humane values in society.

II. Students and the Vocation of Theological Schools

As I write, the press is devoting its usual December attention to religion in America. Amidst the more predictable cover stories about religious yearning and the condition of the various church bodies came a surprising and painful story about seminarians in **The Atlantic Monthly** called "The Hands That Would Shape Our Souls." Author Paul Wilkes wrote his report after nosing around some fifteen different schools, where he visited classes, and interviewed students, faculty, and administrators, and after talking with other observers of theological education. He voices in the independent press what is often only whispered in church circles.

Most uncomfortable are his pointed questions about the future of religious leadership, an issue at the heart of every theologi-

cal school's mission. Given the women and men who are currently studying for the ministry, he asks:

> Is there a critical mass of new leadership in training today? Will they become the religious leaders to whom a skeptical but...spiritually hungry populace is willing to listen? Does this generation of seminarians have the talent and the will to wield moral authority wisely and effectively? Or are today's seminarians an indicator species--endangered, fragile, sterile--signaling finally and decisively the end of religion in America as a per -sonal and public force? (p. 60)

His findings suggest that prospects are mixed at best. He uncovered great uneasiness about the quality of many current students based on judgments about their intellectual acumen, the range and depth of their theological and political convictions, and their life styles. He also learned that students are coming to seminary as seekers at a time when many faculty members, raised as they were on the rebellion and skepticism of the 1960s and 1970s, are not well equipped to respond to their spiritual concerns.

Wilkes' article is significant for theological schools not because his is the last word, nor even that his impressions are representative or his interpretations evenhanded. (Surely the seminaries themselves are not singularly to blame for the ministerial candidates coming from the churches.) Rather, the

appearance of an article with this slant, penned by a Catholic layman, in a national literary magazine is significant because it underscores the widening gap between seminaries and the publics they serve. Those publics--people, church-going or not, who count on the seminary in some way--measure the worth of these schools primarily by the performance of their graduates. For them a satisfactory annual audit or accreditation renewal does not provide the real proof that these schools are fulfilling their mission. Even the luster of recognized faculty scholarship is no substitute for the stamp of credibility they seek above all in a reliable supply of able and wise ministers for their communities.

Concerns such as those voiced by Wilkes about seminarians create the backdrop for viewing recent trends in the composition of the student population. Dramatic changes have been occurring in the last two decades that challenge conventional approaches in theological schooling. Unless schools develop the means to respond creatively to these changes, they will jeopardize their mission and continue to relinquish their responsibility for preparing leadership for the churches in society.

"Diversity" is the term most often used to describe the changing numbers and composition of student populations: more students are enrolled in more programs and they represent a wider swath of religious people in age, gender, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, geography of residence, and preseminary

education. Together these factors suggest a shift to more diversity in religious enculturation, to borrow a term from the anthropologists. Fewer of these students have in common the same mentors or formative experiences than in the past. Their pilgrimages to seminary are more individual. In fact, they may come to seminary in search of others with whom to interpret their many pasts. The politicizing of personal history is one result. Although I suspect that my theory is more true of students currently attending mainline Protestant schools than among those in evangelical or Roman Catholic schools, I would argue that the trend is at least incipient on all fronts.

The following trends prompted these conclusions. Over the last decade and a half, the numbers of students enrolled in all programs in ATS schools has increased dramatically. Most of this growth is attributed to the rise of new programs in addition to the masters of divinity course. These include the Doctor of Ministry degree program, various masters programs, many for non-ordained ministry and study, and certificate programs.

In 1972 there were 33,036 students; in 1989 the number reached 56,187. These figures become especially meaningful when they are broken down by religious sector. For example, overall enrollments in Roman Catholic schools have not increased, and in fact have decreased by about 15%. Mainline Protestant schools, on the other hand, have grown at a moderate rate, while the size of evangelical Protestant schools has increased the most dramati-

cally. Independent evangelical schools tripled their enrollments in fifteen years, while those denominationally related doubled their enrollments.

The story changes when enrollments in the master of divinity course are examined. In Catholic schools, the enrollment has decreased by 60% in fifteen years. In fact, enrollments in the ordination program currently stand at half of what they were in 1967. Among Protestants, although mainline schools have smaller enrollments than evangelical ones, the growth in their masters of divinity programs has been proportionately greater. Ironically, while Catholics face an increasing shortage of priests, some Protestant bodies have a surfeit of ordained ministers.

Women responded in growing numbers to both old and new programs and helped to sustain increased enrollments. In 1972, one in every ten enrolled in seminary was a woman, although only one in every twenty was enrolled in the masters of divinity course. By 1989 three out of every ten enrolled in all programs and one in four students enrolled in the masters of divinity program were women. These patterns of change have varied with the sector: women constitute about half the student enrollment in mainline Protestant independent schools, but in evangelical schools the proportion is much lower.

Ethnic and racial diversity is somewhat greater. In 1989 African American students comprised 7% of the total enrollment, an increase from 3% in 1972. One in five black students attends

one of six historic black seminaries, with the remainder attending all other seminaries, but most heavily concentrated at schools of the American Baptist and the United Methodist churches, mainline denominations with the largest black memberships. Asian American students comprise 3.7% of the enrolled population. Hispanic American students constitute 2.7%, with the greatest numbers enrolled in evangelical independent and Roman Catholic schools.

Many women and men who came to seminary in this period were also second career students who raised the average age of the student population. In the masters of divinity program the average age increased from 25 in 1972 to 31 in 1987, the last year for which records are available. More recent studies of applicants who took the Graduate Record Examination suggest that half the women and one third of the men who applied for admission are over the age of 30. Moreover, the age distribution varies in different settings. Mainline Protestant seminarians are significantly older than their counterparts in evangelical schools. For example, in 1987 the average age of students in Episcopal schools was 38.1, in Southern Baptist schools 28.6. Catholic students are older by five years than those attending seminary twenty years ago.

More students with trauma in their past are attending seminary, although there may not be comparable records for earlier years. In one example, the increase in the divorce rate

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culturally is mirrored in the seminary population. Studies indicate that the older Protestant women seminarians are, the more likely that they are divorced. The same is not true of their male counterparts. A study of seminarians conducted between 1977 and 1989 indicated that seven percent of the women in their late twenties and more than 25% in their late forties were divorced. Another study found that the percentage of all seminarians who have been through divorce increased from 4% in 1975 to 12% in 1989. The same study discovered that in 1989 one in four seminarians had divorced parents, whereas in 1975 the number had been one in ten.

Denominational identity is another form of diversity. Unfortunately it has not been fully analyzed. One tantalizing finding from 1987 indicates that one-third of all seminarians were seeking official status in denominations other than the ones from which they came. Another pattern that has emerged is the increasing enrollment in denominational seminaries of students from other denominations. The evidence for this appears in individual seminary catalogues which list the denominations represented by entering classes and often boast of their ecumenical atmosphere. Older and commuting students no doubt have contributed to this trend, since their jobs or those of there spouses may create geographical limits to their options in theological education.

In another piece of catalogue information, entering students

hold bachelors and other degrees from a far wider array of colleges and universities than was once the case. Few church related colleges in the mainline yet serve as "feeder schools," although many evangelical schools continue to play this role. Seminaries also appear less certain about the basic prerequisites for pursuing a first theological degree.

Although no composite figures currently exist on the proportion of commuting to residential students in all seminaries, many schools are reporting these changes and one study found that in 1987 one-quarter of all masters of divinity seminarians were still employed in their former occupations and very likely were nonresident. This pattern held true for older students, especially early in their seminary careers.

During this same period of time the number of students who were enrolled part-time increased to the point that in 1978 the ATS introduced the category of "full-time equivalency." Since 1978 the average student study load has declined 10% from 78% of a full load to 68.6 % in 1987. Enrollments in masters of divinity programs skew these figures, since the average study loads are quite high. Yet, even they dropped from 90.5% in 1978 to 82.8% in 1987.

The diversity and life experience of current student populations has raised a host of policy questions for those who govern and manage theological schools. These schools are engaged in considering such issues as the following, all of which intersect

and raise fundamental issues of purpose.

1. **How does a theological school sustain enrollment and also standards of admission?** Financial stability and academic integrity appear to be at odds. When Wilkes summarized his interviews with deans and other observers, he suggested a sad picture in which schools are creating and tailoring their programs for the students who will come, and not necessarily those desired. Comparative measures of decline in the academic ability of applicants are difficult to determine, although faculty members describe a strong sense that change is occurring.

Evidence from the 1980s using Graduate Record Examination verbal scores puts all applicants for masters of divinity programs slightly below average among those prospective masters level students in the liberal arts and helping professions. Important gender differences were also demonstrated. Prospective M.Div. students who were women consistently scored somewhat higher than those who were men on both the verbal and quantitative sections. Moreover, in this same population 33% of the women but only 19% of the men were in the top quarter on verbal scores. Compared to the overall test-taking population, these same women scored above average and men below average on the verbal section. Men held scores below average on the quantitative section and women measured above average until 1984 when the exam was modified and their scores dipped slightly.

2. **How much responsibility should a theological school take**

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for providing remedial courses, tutorial help, flexible scheduling or other individualized assistance to maintain academic norms? How important is a liberal arts background to a theological curriculum? Are there basic skills in critical thinking and analytical writing that should be required of all students?

3. What is the school's role in religious formation? When students of the school's founding or reigning tradition do not have the rudiments of biblical or catechetical, devotional or liturgical learning, is the school responsible for providing compensatory formation?

4. How much responsibility does a school of one denominational tradition or theological orientation have to represent that point of view while also fostering theological exploration and debate among the other Christian traditions represented in the student body? Can ecumenism be taught without promoting appreciation of individual traditions?

5. Is the school responsible for providing resources for the spiritual formation of students? Should there be a campus chaplain?

6. Shall the seminary provide psychological screening (including the genuine possibility of dismissal), counseling services and recovery programs for students who have been buffeted by their life experiences? Both second and first career students are prone to such problems which, if not addressed in seminary, will fester in the parish. And can the seminary afford

to ignore ideologies among the students which cultivate a victim mentality that absolves them of personal responsibility for their behavior?

7. What kinds of facilities and services are needed by a student body made up of both married and single, younger and older students? How much flexibility can be structured into the physical plant to allow for changing enrollment trends?

These and other issues push beyond the context of the seminary and its policies for recruitment and retention of students to religious life in the whole church. What are the conditions that encourage and nurture people in their exploration of a vocation in the parish ministry? What is the board's role in aiding the seminary to press such concerns within the churches?

III. The Faculty and the Vocation of Theological Schools

When theological schools establish, clarify or renew their mission, they create the basis upon which to build and nurture the faculty members who will most directly carry out these purposes. Recent studies and evaluations in theological education indicate that theological faculties are faced with tremendous pressures. Small faculties, limited academic budgets, and expanding programs are stretching academic resources to the limit in ways that impede the pursuit of a school's vocation.

In the late 1980s, the average size of the full-time theological faculty was 13.34 members, an increase of only one

member over the previous fifteen years. Increased hiring of part-time instructors supplies the regular means by which seminaries meet the staffing demands created by new fields of study and expanded programs. Since 1972 there has been a 125% increase in part-time personnel, or an increase from 2.5 (FTE) part-time faculty members per school to 4.8 (FTE). In 1972 about one in six classes was offered by a part-time instructor. By 1987 the ratio had changed to one in four.

While the growing use of part-time teachers may be an economically clever way to widen the scope and extend the curriculum beyond the campus, it also stretches an administration's capacity to build consensus around the school's purposes and standards and to encourage the maturation of scholarship. In addition, under the usual conditions, such non-faculty instructors, while teaching a quarter of the classes, are usually not invited to share their insights in curricular decision making or student life policy.

The pattern of staffing also points to more basic and ultimately theological issues surrounding the structure of the curriculum. Since the mid-1980s, seminary faculties and administrators have been discussing Edward Farley's book Theologia on the fragmentation of the theological curriculum. In Farley's view neither the traditional fourfold curricular structure (biblical, theological, historical and practical studies) nor the contemporary action/reflection modification unifies the cur-

riculum in the face of the collapse of confessional agreement and the rise of new fields with competing philosophical bases. This fragmentation of fields of study abandons students, many of whom may be less capable than their predecessors, to their own devices for constructing a coherent theological view.

Other factors are aggravating these centrifugal tendencies within the curriculum. The graduate training of faculty members tends to encourage academic specialization and not to reward them for developing broader interests in the whole of theological studies. In the past, specialization was somewhat less of a threat because most seminary professors pursued their fields only after having taken their first theological degree from a seminary. Now that generation is retiring and being replaced by numbers of younger scholars who do not share their seminary experience but hold only university doctorates, many from the newer departments of religious studies. The younger generation may be less familiar with or committed to the purposes of theological education.

In addition, time pressures faced by faculty members in these small and complex institutions may isolate them within their fields. As the single representative of a field within the seminary, a faculty member may be tempted neither to take the time nor to make the opportunity to pursue those collegial relations which are necessary to sustain maturing scholarship.

The effects of fragmentation may be further compounded by

well-meaning attempts to make faculties more representative in gender, ethnicity and race, and theological orientation. When diversity is celebrated for its own sake and not as a means to encouraging wider support for an agreed upon institutional mission, all the ingredients are in place for periodic battles over curricular turf and faculty appointments and advancements.

So it is that patterns of diversity within the student body coexist with patterns of increasing diversity within theological faculties. In light of these trends, several questions confront the schools and their governing boards.

1. How will faculty members and trustees develop the shared sense of institutional history and vocation necessary for making strategic academic decisions about the number and character of academic programs, the make up of the faculty and the shape and quality of the curriculum?

2. How will faculty members be found and nurtured who take to heart both the intellectual and the spiritual life of the seminary community for the sake of the church?

3. How will faculty members--challenged as they are by their multiple responsibilities and relatively limited salaries--be encouraged in their scholarship and in pursuing the collegial conversations they need to mature in their research and teaching? How will part-time instructors be encouraged as scholars and as colleagues in advancing the school's mission?

4. How may theological schools contribute to the improvement

of the theological education of the laity at a time when the specialization of faculty members and the theological illiteracy of many of the laity hinder their common discourse?

IV. Management and Governance and the Vocation of Theological Schools

Robert Greenleaf (1914-1990) decried the absence of a sufficient "theology of institutions" among religious people. He hoped that seminaries would promote a form of servant leadership in the church which ministers to men and women not simply as individuals, but as people of influence in church and society. In this way, he believed that seminaries could help to create a more humane society. While his challenge to seminaries may have underplayed the importance of their role in keeping the churches faithful, his sense for institutions reminds us that seminary leaders are modeling institutional care by the way they conduct seminary business.

The faculties and administrators of theological schools share an ambivalence about administration that is both similar and dissimilar to other institutions of higher education. Henry Rosovsky, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Harvard, notes this theme in an essay on being a dean: "One of our cliches says, anyone who really wants these posts should be disqualified. Governance is a form of class treason, a leap from 'we' to 'they,' and a betrayal of our primary mission--teaching and

research." Interviews with seminary chief executives reveal a similar kind of reticence. Most come from the faculty and view themselves as "temporary managers." Administration is not a career goal that is held in high esteem. In fact pieties which do not permit the expression of ambition, along with the absence of mentors and sufficient administrative testing grounds, impede the cultivation of new leadership. One Catholic dean quoted by Katarina Schuth in her book on the futures of Roman Catholic theologates stated that "respect for the vocation of administration is still low. You would think St. Paul had never mentioned it in I Corinthians."

Meanwhile, the office of chief executive, variously called president, rector, dean or principal, has grown more complex and stressful. ATS statistics on turnover give the most concrete evidence of these changes: between 15 and 20 percent of these offices are vacated each year. Robert Lynn comments in Good Stewardship that if that rate continues to increase, "it could mean that sometime in the future many seminary boards will have to contemplate the possibility of faster-moving cycles of presidential searches and transitional periods at the beginning and end of administrations."

Chief executives are at the center of a vortex of centrifugal forces. Diversification and expansion are remaking the seminaries and first and foremost the office of the president. In ways that are both symbolic and strategic, seminary publics have

increased their expectations of presidential performance. Thus when presidents repeatedly say in surveys that they want more help in fund-raising and strategic planning, they are asking for more than new management techniques. They are looking for interpretative frameworks within which to order their assignments and build the public side of their office.

Parallel pressures are also affecting the office of the dean or vice president for academic affairs. Deans are even more likely than presidents to come directly from the faculty. In Catholic theologates, where this office is relatively new and undeveloped, an astounding fifty percent of all deans left office within a three year period. Academic planning can hardly occur under such conditions.

The development of seminary administration is one of the trademarks of the recent era. That this growth should occur more as a matter of expertise than of numbers should not be surprising. ATS statistics indicate that since 1972, the average increase of administrators was 1.4 persons per school for a total average of 5.95 persons. Since 1982, 114 theological schools have sent administrators to the Institute for Theological Education Management staffed by professors from the Columbia School of Business under the aegis of the ATS and with funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc. The case-oriented summer curriculum provides introductory level training in strategic planning.

Increases in the complexity of management have been

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accompanied by greater awareness of responsibilities in governance. In general theological school governance had tended to reside de facto with the faculty until the era of student rebellion and double digit inflation in the 1970s. Self-consciousness about the structures of governance has grown steadily ever since, even if standards for effective trusteeship have been elusive both to individual institutions and to the body of these schools.

There are of course significant exceptions to these generalizations. Where theological schools have not traditionally had significant levels of denominational or other single sources of funding and where the governing board has been self-selecting, trusteeship has served a vital function. Fuller Theological Seminary, an evangelical independent school founded in 1947, is the best known case. During a financial crisis in the late 1950's the president and his newly appointed development officer began working to make up for decreases in funding from their central source, the Fuller Foundation, and discovered that the school had no natural constituency within the newly emerging evangelical movement.

During an interregnum, the same development officer set to work building the board and helped to attract some able entrepreneurs, such as Davis Weyerhaeuser, which strengthened the hand of evangelical progressives on the faculty and contributed to the election of David Hubbard in 1962. Under Hubbard the

board was developed as the seminary's primary external public so that by the 1970s Fuller drew its main support from tuition and a well cultivated circle of some 2000 contributors. The board itself provided one-third of all annual gifts.

The Fuller story anticipates challenges facing many schools. The attention paid at Fuller to the governing board in recruitment, education, spiritual renewal, community building, leadership development, and presidential and faculty relationships exemplifies some of the most sophisticated theories of trusteeship. Close observers are even more impressed when they come to realize that board development at Fuller is a way of life, not a task that is ever completed once and for all.

In most denominationally related boards, considerable energy is devoted to issues of representation. In many evangelical denominational and Roman Catholic schools, where a great deal of money still flows from church to seminary coffers and the parameters of theological accountability are periodically clarified, representation is a matter of providing for sufficient regional diversity and authority from the regional or diocesan units of the denomination, church or religious order.

In most mainline institutions, where there has been a decrease in denominational contributions and a lack of consensus on theological accountability, issues of representation surface primarily as matters of diversity in ethnicity, race, gender, lay or clergy status, and more recently in vocational expertise and

access to wealth. (Of course, virtually all theological schools are deeply involved in fund raising as the gap between costs and revenue continues to increase.)

Unfortunately, the focus on representation considers only half of the equation. A governing board must have the formal and informal processes in place to negotiate differences in light of common standards based on a common vision for the school. Where representational definitions of trusteeship overwhelm all other understandings, they fail to take seriously either the school's mission or the corporate work of trusteeship.

As in the Fuller story, the greatest prod for board development has come from fiscal crises. While the next section will detail these trends, there is increasing clarity about the board's role in helping a school meet its fiscal needs. In a 1988 survey taken by the AGB of presidents about their boards, presidents reported that three-quarters or more of their schools had the following four committees: finance, development, academic affairs and executive.

Efforts at strengthening governing boards have not all been spontaneous. Since the late 1970s, both the AGB and the Lilly Endowment have been prompting schools through a variety of programs. AGB's most recent program focus, a two and one half day leadership institute for board chairs and seminary executives, has involved thirty institutions since 1988 and will be held again in March. Of those who have attended, 66% have been

from mainline schools, 19% from evangelical ones and 13% from Roman Catholic schools. A total of 52 of the 202 ATS member schools have held AGB membership at one time or another since 1982 with the current number at 46. Not a few chief executives complain that their size and budget make it difficult for them to pay AGB's hefty membership fees.

When seminary participation in AGB programs since 1982 is cross tabulated with the size and religious orientation of these schools, AGB's ability to reach across the spectrum of schools becomes apparent. More than half of all theological schools have had contact with an AGB program more than once. When taken together, AGB and other programs in theological school trusteeship sponsored by Lilly Endowment have attracted the participation of 146 institutions representing the full range of religious groups, although a disproportionately higher number of mainline denominational and evangelical independent schools have responded to these offerings.

Several questions about governance and management confront theological schools.

1. **If the presidency is an office besieged by an increasing number of demands and if presidential turn-over is increasing, how will boards promote greater support and more focus for the office? How can potential candidates be nourished for these positions?**

2. **How will seminaries that have little influence over**

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either the make-up of their boards or denominational sources of funding build strength?

3. How do church bodies, faculties and boards learn to view representation as a means to an end rather than an end in itself? How do boards develop a sense of corporate responsibility?

4. How does a school's governing board, administration and faculty build a common institutional vision and work together to maintain its integrity?

V. Finances and Physical Plants and the Vocation of Theological Schools

I have saved the discussion of fiscal and property matters for last. While these are often the topics with which lay trustees are the most comfortable, they must be recognized as means not ends. They provide resources for the exercise of the school's vocation. As in all the other sectors, the forces at work in these areas are pressing theological schools to respond to more and diverse factors in the environment.

The funding of Protestant denominational theological education has been the subject of several studies over the last decade. Two basic features prevail: denominations set (and disrupt) patterns of funding; denominational funding continues to decline while costs continue to rise.

One researcher has characterized patterns of funding seminaries using metaphorically an economist's point of view. There

are "market economies" in which it is up to the local congregation to determine which seminary or seminaries receive support. In these economies seminaries receive little or no support from a national denominational central fund. Two examples among mainline schools are the American Baptist Church and the United Church of Christ. Three factors play a crucial role in this pattern: a seminary's direct communication with congregations; a seminary's reputation or theological position; a congregation's history of giving.

"Planned economies" denote a second pattern in which local congregations contribute to a national fund which is then distributed by the national denomination according a previously negotiated formula. There are also "mixed economies" in which a central denominational fund is used to equalize inequities that arise from congregational or regional patterns of giving. Examples of the latter two forms appear among the total of 43 schools in the following denominations: the Disciples of Christ/ Christian Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southern Baptist Convention.

So called "planned" and "mixed" economies are characterized by their rationality. These denominational schools belong to systems in which their needs are evaluated and resources are distributed according to those needs. This funding pattern produces a certain amount of predictability, along with the exercise of

due process. Yet, difficulties with centralized control remain. It can reduce the incentive to communicate with local congregations, reward mediocrity, and keep individual seminaries buffered from streams of opinion within the church. Moreover, the financial condition of the denomination will directly affect the seminaries.

Indeed, the second basic feature is the trend toward reduced denominational funding for theological education. For several decades, denominations have been receiving fewer funds as the costs of congregations and local religious organizations have increased and membership has decreased. To make up for the deficit in national and regional (e.g., synodical, diocesan, conference, association) denominational funding, seminaries have had to cultivate more local donors and congregations, and other friends of the school. Hence, more and more schools are creating and expanding offices of development. Under such pressures, the office of chief executive has expanded to include more work with external publics in fundraising.

Since the initiation of these patterns occurred under the pressures of double digit inflation in the early 1970s, the developing recession of the early 1990s is likely to call for even greater creativity in fundraising and student recruitment. Seminaries have made some headway in building their endowments, widening their donor base and institutionalizing the means for fundraising. Nevertheless, in many places tuition increases are

being used to close budget gaps and student indebtedness is a growing concern.

Roman Catholic schools are heavily dependent on the dioceses and religious orders that sponsor them and traditionally have maintained low tuition rates. With rising costs, many theologates are under pressure from bishops and religious superiors to generate more of their own support. More than half of the schools have turned to development programs and more sophisticated financial planning and accounting procedures. Other practices that developed in Protestant schools have not had a natural habitat in Catholic schools. For example, since scholarship funds do not exist, many Catholic lay students pursue their theological education in Protestant seminaries.

The pressure on theological schools to generate funds for both current operation and endowments has in many instances been the primary incentive for strengthening governing boards through recruitment and education. These pressures are also affecting the make-up of seminary boards. In a recent survey of seminary presidents conducted by the AGB, forty percent expressed the opinion that business executives and other professionals were underrepresented on their boards and one third thought that clergy were overrepresented.

The desire for increased lay representation, particularly by individuals who have proven their ability to succeed in the marketplace, introduces an understanding of the church that

reaches beyond official structures and invites the development of new resources and new forms of accountability. At the same time, the new lay leadership will have to be cultivated to promote increased understanding and appreciation of the work of theological education. The traditional role upheld by the clergy on seminary boards also invites study to clarify their work in the stewardship of religious institutions.

Two problems will continue to haunt institutional planning in the future. First, a likely expense at most seminaries in the coming decade will be the rising costs of attending to deferred maintenance and of creating or renovating structures for more flexible use as student bodies vary their mix of commuting and older students. While studies of these needs are currently under way, preliminary assessments indicate that delaying maintenance costs only increased expenses at a time when all budget lines are under pressure. Second, theological schools will continue to struggle with the financial implications of providing for a student population with an ever decreasing number of full-time students. Old formulas no longer work and as yet no satisfactory consensus has developed around new ones.

Several issues are suggested by these trends:

1. How will seminaries maintain their vocations in light of increasing financial pressures to respond to markets?

2. How will seminaries and churches maintain strong relations in an age in which direct funding from church sources con-

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tinues to decrease?

3. How much autonomy do seminaries need to meet their fiscal requirements?

4. How shall a seminary's physical plant be evaluated in a time of fluctuating enrollment as the setting which supports the seminary in its vocation?

5. How much shall the office of the chief executive be shaped by the increasing need to raise financial resources?

VI. Conclusion

Theological schools are beset by forces within the external environment that are dramatically changing the composition of student bodies and faculties, increasing pressures on administrative offices, and reducing former certainties about funding. Centrifugal forces of pluralism are at work in a time when North American Christianity appears to be more fluid and less able to contain itself within denominational lines or to socialize people to the faith in the once traditional ways.

The governing boards of theological schools, standing as they do at the intersection of school and church, and church and society, are poised to ask the guiding questions and to press for the deeper insights. Theirs is a role that has not yet lived up to its potential. In these exciting and difficult times as they consider the quality of students, the state of the faculty, the practices of governance and management, and the conditions of

finances and physical plant, boards may benefit from conceiving of their schools as "learning organizations" that seek to avoid the double danger of blind drift and mindless adaptation. They must become inveterate askers of the hard questions that expose reality, while at the same time they are no less supporter of seminary leaders who articulate a vision for the school. Study--of themselves as board and of the institution--must be their motto. The stewardship of the vocation of their schools demands no less.

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